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NOTES AND MEMORANDA.

THE first number of the *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Socialpolitik, und Verwaltung*, is announced as to appear this month in Vienna, under the management of Messrs. Böhm-Bawerk, Inama-Sternegg, and Ernst von Plener. The periodical is to be issued quarterly, and is to be open to the entire range of social and economic discussion, both theoretical and practical, with no tendency to the support of any special school of thought, but with a welcome for all views presented and treated in an earnest and scientific manner. The announcement and the names of the editors alike bespeak for the new-comer an important place in current economic literature. It is premised that concrete Austrian questions will have special attention, and that the periodical will be the organ of the "Gesellschaft österreichischer Volkswirthe"; but its chief work is certain not to be confined within territorial boundaries. The Secretary of the Board of Editors is Dr. H. von Schullern, of the Central Statistical Commission, Vienna.

THE "Office du Travail," established by the French government and referred to in Mr. Wright's article on "The Evolution of Wages Statistics" (see p. 188), is organized as a distinct service in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and the Colonies, by a decree dated August 19, 1891. M. Lax, inspector-general of the Ponts et Chaussées, has been made director, and has under his charge two chiefs of section, an actuary, and eight clerks of various grades, the total budget of the Office being settled at 152,900 francs.

The duties of the Office are declared to be to compile and publish information as to labor, the condition and development of production, the organization and remuneration of labor, its

relations with capital, and the comparative situation of its interests in France and in other countries, and also to make such investigations as may be required by the Minister of Commerce. For the purpose of investigation outside of the Office itself, the director has three permanent delegates, and can appoint others temporarily to make special inquiries.

The statistics and other information prepared by the Office are to appear in a periodical, the *Bulletin de l'Office du Travail*, and in special publications as occasion may require.

SWITZERLAND has determined to substitute the issue of notes by one large bank under public control for the system of issues by numerous banks which has prevailed under the Constitution of 1874. The issues of the Swiss banks have been well protected and have had good credit, but their increasing amount has raised the question as to a monopoly of issue by government. The amount in circulation has been:—

1881, . . .	87.2 mill. francs.	1889, . . .	145.5 mill. francs.
1886, . . .	127 “ “	1891, . . .	161.3 “ “

This rapid gain and the prospect of its continuance have led to a discussion in which also the general tendency of an important party to favor consolidation of the federal power at the expense of the cantons has counted for something; and accordingly a decisive amendment of Article 39 of the Constitution was proposed, and on October 18 was adopted by the people, being strongly supported in the German-speaking cantons. By this amendment, the article, which formerly expressly forbade the establishment of any monopoly of issue or of any obligation to receive bank-notes, has been amended so as to declare that the right of issue belongs exclusively to the Confederation, and may be exercised either by a national bank or by a central incorporated bank under the control of the Confederation. The profits of the issuing bank, after proper deductions for interest on capital and for surplus, are to be made over, to the extent of two-thirds, to the cantons, and the bank is to be exempt from all local taxation. The obliga-

tory receipt of notes cannot be decreed by the Confederation except in case of necessity in time of war.

La banque investie du monopole aura pour tâche principale de servir en Suisse de régulateur du marché de l'argent et de faciliter les opérations de paiement.

Whether the bank which is to assume this important function shall be a state bank or an incorporated bank, like the Bank of France, is the question for a final struggle, not unlikely to be stormy.

THE composition of the monetary circulation of France was investigated by order of the Minister of Finance in April last, upon the plan which has been followed on two or three previous occasions; and the results, published in the *Bulletin de Statistique et de Législation Comparée* for August, have formed the basis for some discussion as to the probable amount of the French legal tender currency, gold and silver. The measure taken by the minister was to secure on a fixed day a statement of the composition of the cash then held by all cash-keepers for the treasury and post-office, and by the offices of the Société Générale, and a statement of the composition of receipts on the same day by the Bank of France and the Crédit Lyonnais and all their branches. The cash then taken account of as being in sight amounted to 120.6 millions of francs, thus made up:—

Bank of France notes,	97.1 mill. francs.
Gold coin,	16.4 “ “
Silver “	7.1 “ “
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 120.6

As this cash excludes all amounts held as reserve, it may be taken as representing fairly the condition of the commercial circulation and more especially the description, nationality, and age of the metallic currency; and this presumption is strengthened by the close similarity between the results now obtained and those of the investigations of 1878 and 1885. The figures for the metallic currency, given in percentages, compare as follows:—

	1878	1885	1891
Proportion of gold,	73.55	69.33	69.10
“ “ silver,	26.45	30.67	30.90
Proportion of French gold,	87.12	89.64	88.64
“ “ foreign “	12.88	10.36	11.36
Proportion of French silver,	67.99	71.24	68.48
“ “ foreign “	32.01	28.76	31.52

Upon these figures and the returns as to the age of the napoleons and silver five-franc pieces M. de Foville has made an estimate, given in the *Économiste Français* and also in the *Journal de la Société de Statistique de Paris* for November, fixing the monetary stock of France in 1891 as follows:—

Silver money, nominal value	2½	milliards of francs.
“ “ actual	2	“ “ “
Gold “	4	“ “ “

These amounts are arrived at chiefly by observing the proportions of coin struck in different years still remaining in circulation. Thus the almost complete disappearance of the five-franc pieces struck before 1830 and the great deficiency in those of Louis Philippe, in M. de Foville's opinion, reduces the probable outstanding legal tender silver of the Latin Union to less than three milliards, from which is to be deducted the probable holding of the smaller members of the Union. The stock of gold is arrived at by means of the observed proportion between gold and silver, and by allowing for the large stock of coin held by the Bank of France, as follows:—

	Stock.	In bank.	Active.	Per cent.
Silver 5-franc pieces, . . .	2,200	1,000	1,200	31
Gold 20 and 10 franc pieces, .	3,700	1,000	2,700	69

Subsidiary silver and gold of other denominations bring up the total stock to the figures given above. These estimates, it is to be observed, are much below those of M. Ottomar Haupt; and he has replied to M. de Foville, in the *Économiste Français* of October 24, fixing the stock of silver in France in 1891 at three and a half milliards. Without entering upon details, it must be observed that M. Haupt relies to

a dangerous extent upon the approximate correctness of the movement of metals shown by custom-house returns. These returns in more than one country have been so discredited as to make it impossible to assume even that the errors will offset each other.

BOEHM-BAWERK'S DEFINITION OF CAPITAL, AND THE SOURCE OF WAGES.

In his exposition of the term "capital," Professor Böhm-Bawerk briefly touches on the wages-fund doctrine, so far as to reject summarily the proposition that the means of subsistence of productive laborers is drawn from the capital of the community, although, from the point of view of the employer, these "real wages" are to be regarded as drawn from his private capital. With the distinction which the discussion establishes between social capital and private capital, this position is, of course, in itself perfectly consistent. The position is, indeed, contained in the definition of capital previously arrived at (pp. 42, 43, and 21). The ground of the position taken is the unquestioned or, at all events, unquestionable truth that the laborer is a member of society, and his consumption of products is, in a broad view, a fact of the same kind, and of like theoretical significance with consumption on the part of any other member of society. The satisfaction of wants, whether it be the wants of the laborer or of any other, is the end, not the means, of productive activity.

While the exposition at this point undeniably sheds a strong light on the question, it can hardly be said to have finally disposed of all ground for difference of opinion, still less to have explained away the wages-fund controversy, or that point of the controversy which concerns the question of the source of wages. And that controversy has been of such extent and earnestness as to raise the presumption that something is to be said for both sides of the dispute, and to leave little hope of its being finally put at rest by any other method than that of explaining away the ground of difference. For reaching this end, I believe Professor Böhm-Bawerk's exposition of capital has given us the means.